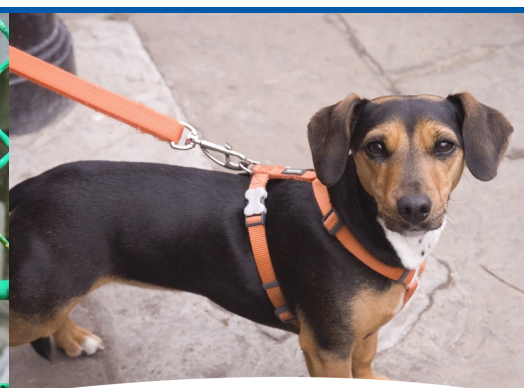




Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017-21



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1. Introduction

Council is committed to advocating for and working towards achieving positive community and animal welfare outcomes. The welfare and care of all companion animals is important within the municipality. Council will aim to keep the community safe and protecting animal welfare by educating the community on responsible pet ownership and performing legislative functions as required.

What is a Domestic Animal Management Plan?

All Victorian councils are required by the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to prepare and implement a four year Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) to guide decision making in relation to animal management for dogs and cats. The scope of the DAMP does not include activities for the management of wildlife, horses, livestock or pest animals.

This four year plan builds on the 2013-17 DAMP and provides the framework for the planning, development and evaluation of animal management services and programs delivered by Swan Hill Rural City Council and complies with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA).

Legislation

Section 68A of the DAA requires Council to develop a DAMP at four year intervals that addresses the following:

- Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
- Outline programs for the training of Authorised Officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
- Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district; and
- To promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
- To ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
- To minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- To address any over population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- To encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- To minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- To effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
- Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and Local Laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in municipal district are desirable; and
- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it deems necessary; and
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined in this Plan.

Every Council must—

- (a) Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the Plan;
- (b) Provide the Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments to the Plan; and
- (c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.

Council aims

The aim of Swan Hill Rural City Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 is to ensure the effective management of domestic animals within the municipality. This includes the establishment of a framework to guide future service programs that are informed and action orientated through to 2021. It sets priorities that are achievable and measurable within current allocated resources.

Council encourages people to manage dogs and cats in ways that protect the health and welfare of these companion animals, and considers needs of the broader community by encouraging responsible pet ownership practices.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide Council and the community with a clear and concise statement as to how Council administers animal management by:

- Documenting current processes and practices under the Swan Hill Rural City Council animal management responsibilities.
- Minimising non-compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Increasing pet owner's knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership and enhancing community safety and awareness of the benefits of its annual registration.
- Supporting the Regulatory Services team to achieve its stated objectives of reducing the numbers of dogs and cats being impounded and euthanised.
- Maximising the numbers of dogs and cats that are registered.
- Reducing the harmful effect of domestic pets on the population of native birds, mammals and reptiles.
- Take into account the broader community views on animal management matters.
- Comply with the relevant provisions of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Development

This plan has been developed based on the outcomes and learning's from the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan, as well as a review of the existing data in areas such as complaints, dog attacks, registrations and impoundments.

Council recognises that the plan must carefully balance the needs of pets, pet owners and those who don't own pets. The plan is designed to respond strategically to the needs of the community as a whole.

Community feedback and consultations with key stakeholders including veterinarians, animal businesses and other service providers have also informed the plan. The predominant issues identified include:

- Increasing compliance with the Act
- Identification of potential off-leash areas
- Reduce the number of stray and wandering cats
- Investigation and introduction of 'on-leash' and other local laws relating to dogs and cats towards responsible pet ownership
- Increased education and enforcement in relation to domestic animal management

Administration

The Regulatory Services Department is responsible for domestic animal management. By implementing this plan Council will endeavor to provide a service that meets both community expectations and compliance obligations under the DAA.

2. Council profile

Swan Hill Rural City has a population of 20,584 people according to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data. It is principally an agricultural and horticultural region of 6,116 km², bordered by the Murray River which is the water source for irrigation, domestic, industry, and recreational pursuits.

The municipality consists of two large service centres, being Swan Hill and Robinvale, and a number of smaller towns including Lake Boga, Manangatang, Beverford, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Ultima, Woorinen and Woorinen South. The predominant employment sectors are agriculture, forestry and fishing and retail trade.

Domestic animal statistics and data

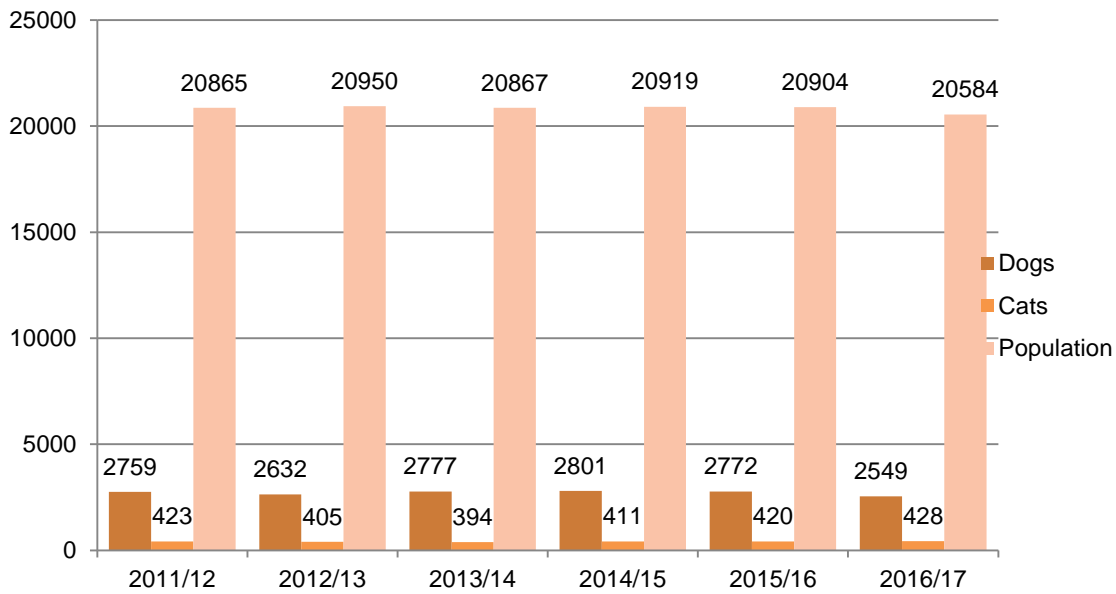
The tables below provide an overview of animal management data from 2013-2017 financial years.

Dogs	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Number of registered dogs	2777	2801	2772	2549
Number of microchipped dogs that were impounded		104	104	84
Number of impounded dogs (excluding surrendered)	338	227	230	165
Number of dogs surrendered		45	59	23
Number of impounded dogs returned to owners	129	101	102	77
Number of dogs re-housed	183	141	154	98
Number of dogs euthanised	26	29	24	13
Number of dangerous dogs in municipality	6	5	6	4
Number of menacing dogs in the municipality	2	4	2	2
Number of restricted breed dogs in municipality	1	0	0	1

Cats	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Number of registered cats	394	411	420	428
Number of microchipped cats that were impounded		7	13	10
Number of cats impounded (including trapping program and excluding surrendered)	267	255	260	110
Number of cats surrendered		18	8	14
Number of cats returned to owners	9	7	20	17
Number of cats re-housed	17	75	68	68
Number of cats euthanised	241	189	180	91
Number of cat traps hired	152	214	137	163
Wild cats trapped			152	66

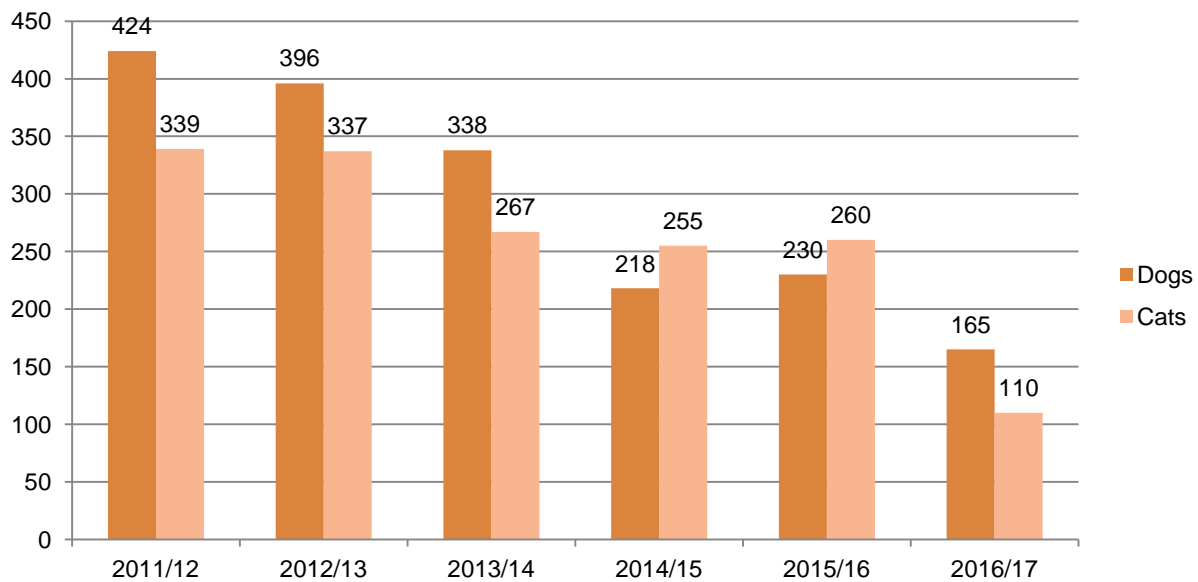
Animals registration

The graph below indicates that animal registrations have remained constant with population growth over the past few years.



Animals impounded

The graph below indicates that the number of dogs and cats impounded has continually decreased.



Animal Management Team profile

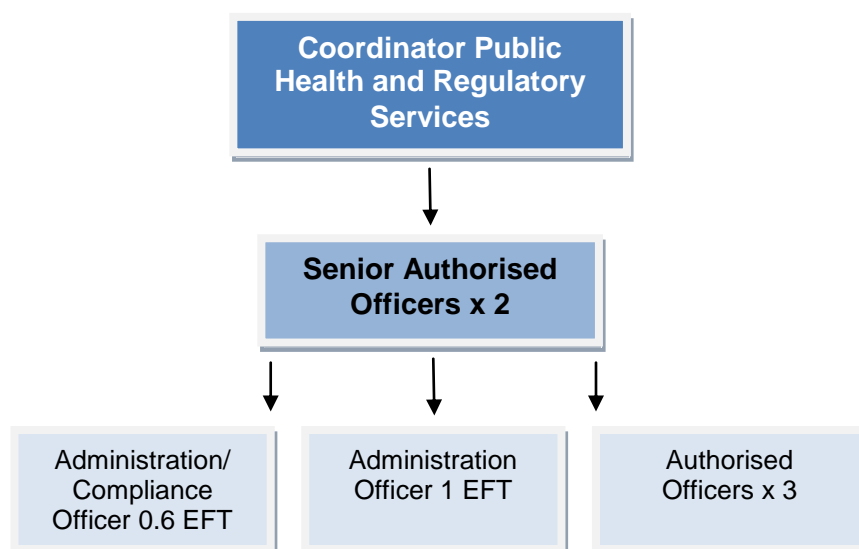
There has been a steady increase in residents requesting assistance from Council with animal related issues and an increasing interest in planning for the needs of pet owners. This is not surprising given that around a third of all households own one or more pets as well as pet ownership now being recognised as having health and social benefits.

Animal management services are currently provided by our Regulatory Services Officers who supervise and enforce statutory requirements under a number of acts, regulations, codes of practice and local laws.

Our Officers undertake proactive initiatives to minimise nuisance and risk to safety of the community. This includes education and provision of advice, negotiation with residents and proactive patrols of parks and reserves.

An emergency after hour's service is provided by an external operator for the response to animal emergencies like dog attacks and livestock on roads.

The team currently consists of the following:



3. Training of Authorised Officers

Context

This section outlines training for authorised officers to ensure that they can administer and enforce the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 in the Council's municipal district.

Actions in this section address section 68(A)(2)(b) to ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their statutory functions.

Current situation

Currently, all of Council's Authorised Officers are trained to the required standards in order to perform the requirements under the legislation. Employees involved in animal management are provided with a mix of on-the-job training, structured courses and industry training in order to ensure that they are competent in their roles.

Duties of all officers include responsibilities under a large variety of legislation. Domestic animal management services forms only a part of each officer's role. These responsibilities includes Local Law administration, livestock control, parking enforcement, production of Local Laws Permits, preparation of infringement and offence prosecutions, administration of fundraising and events and litter control.

Council currently employs the following animal management staff:

EFT	Position	Completed certificate IV in Statutory Compliance	Completed certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation
1 EFT	Senior Authorised Officer	Completed	Completed
1 EFT	Senior Authorised Officer	Completed	Completed
1 EFT	Authorised Officer	Completed	Completed
1 EFT	Authorised Officer	Completed	Completed
1 EFT	Authorised Officer	Completed	Completed
0.6 EFT	Administrative/Compliance Officer	Certificate IV Legal Services	Diploma of Management
1 EFT	Public Health and Regulatory Services Administration Officer		

Additional training for individual Authorised Officers is assessed annually as part of Council's performance review process to ensure ongoing development in their competencies. See appendix A for a full list of current and planned officer training.

Our plans

One of the key initiatives to facilitate the successful delivery of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to ensure all employees involved in domestic animal management have the knowledge and skill set necessary to undertake their statutory roles in a safe and professional manner.

Key objectives:

- Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements
- Be aware of current trends and changes in animal management legislation and best practice
- Conduct a review of internal processes

Performance measures:

Objective 3.1: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
3.1.1 - Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff.	30 June 2018	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy by 30 June 2018.
3.1.2 - Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff including issues related to domestic violence.	30 June 2019	To be incorporated into officers' performance reviews 2018/19.

Objective 3.2: Be aware of current trends and changes in animal management legislation and best practice

Activity	When	Evaluation
3.2.1 - Officers to attend a relevant conference conducted by peak bodies per annum.	Annually	Attendance at conference and feedback to Regulatory Services Unit.
3.2.2 - Officers to utilise social media and websites to ensure they are up to date with current information.	Monthly	Demonstrated improved knowledge of current trends and changes in legislation reflected in practice.

Objective 3.3: Conduct a review of internal processes

Activity	When	Evaluation
3.3.1 Review internal policies and procedures relating to investigation, compliance and enforcement processes to accommodate legal and other changes and ensure consistent application by Authorised Officers.	Annually	Procedures and other related documents are updated and approved, officers are trained and competent.
3.3.2 - Officers to utilise social media and websites to ensure they are up to date with current information.	Annually	Demonstrated improved knowledge of current trends and changes in legislation are reflected and updated in procedures.

4. Registration and identification

Context

To outline programs, services and strategies to encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats.

Actions in this section address section 68A(2)(c)(v) and 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Domestic Animal Management Act.

Current situation

The most effective way to improve animal management is to maximise the number of domestic animals that are registered and identifiable to help return animals home.

Current identification and registration activities implemented by Council include:

- Animal registration renewal notices sent out in February each year.
- Annual registration renewal follow up including:
 - Reminder notices sent out after 10 April
 - Telephone audit
 - Door knock
- All animals released from the pound facilities must be microchipped and registered.
- Council's website is used to help reunite lost pets with their owners as there is a dedicated lost pet's page.
- Staff regularly maintain and update the animal registration database.
- New animal registrations applications received from 1 January until 10 April each year will be registered until 10 April the following year.
- At least one free animal microchipping day is run each year.

Current number of animals currently registered with Council:

Animal Registration	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Dogs	2777	2801	2772	2549
Cats	394	411	420	428
Number of declared dogs in municipality	6	5	6	4

Officers actively undertake compliance activities to ensure the appropriate registration and identification of animals throughout the municipality. These activities include:

- Conducting follow up of owners who have not renewed their animal registration.
- Conducting patrols of the municipality.
- The investigation of unregistered animal complaints.
- Monitoring of advertisements in local papers and newsletters relating to animals for sale to ensure microchip numbers are provided as per the Act.
- Ensuring all animals impounded are identified, registered and microchipped before release.
- Conducting follow up on registration for animals notified as sold by domestic animal businesses.
- Regularly updating and auditing Council's registration database to ensure data is correct (for example ensure notification of deceased animal, change of owner or change of address).
- If an animal is found to be unregistered, the owner is given time to register animal and information is recorded in the Animal Registration Notification Book to ensure follow up is conducted and animal is registered.

Our plans

To increase the numbers of dogs and cats registrations within the municipality and to educate the community regarding the requirement for Council registration.

Key objectives:

- Increase the number of animal registrations
- To promote community understanding of Responsible Pet Ownership

Performance measures:

Objective 4.1: To increase animal registration numbers		
Activity	When	Evaluation
4.1.1 - Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to every release	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded that are not registered to their owner.
4.1.2 - Continue to provide at least one annual free micro-chipping day.	Annually for life of plan	Undertake a cost benefit analysis to ascertain if the income generated is reflective of the cost output.

Objective 4.2: To promote community understanding of Responsible Pet Ownership		
Activity	When	Evaluation
4.2.1 - Improve the use of existing community networks to distribute and share information.	Annually	List of networks identified, contacted and engaged.
4.2.2 - Increase the distribution of information on Responsible Pet Ownership through media releases, social media and availability of pamphlets at key locations throughout the municipality.	Ongoing	Ensure information packs distributed to a number of locations i.e. Vets, pet stores.

5. Nuisance

Context

Actions in this section address section 68A(2)(c)(vi) and 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) by outlining programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance

Current situation

The most common complaints received by Council's Regulatory Services Department are roaming animals and barking dogs. Dogs roaming or dogs not adequately confined to their premises are also a nuisance to the general public and a hazard to motorists. Council's Authorised Officers utilise the DAA and Local Laws to resolve these matters.

Wandering cats continue to be a concern. There is a lack of containment with owners allowing their cats to be outside during the day and night, wandering neighborhoods and having an impact on flora and fauna. Council Officers are collecting almost half as many stray cats as the number of registered cats each year. Unowned domestic or wild cats are a nuisance in the community and create a risk for domesticated cats. Council have provided the following numbers of cat traps to the community in the past three years:

Year	Number of traps
2014/2015	214
2015/2016	138
2016/2017	164

Council and the community continue to experience a real problem with roaming wild cats. This creates a serious problem with nuisance behavior such as spraying, fighting, home invasion and spreading diseases. Wild cats also have a large impact on the number of native birds. Through education, animal owners will be made aware of the need to de-sex their cats, confine domestic cats to their property, report wild cats and be involved in trapping programs to reduce wild cat numbers.

In the past three years the following number of roaming animal complaints have been received:

Year	Number of complaints
2014	293
2015	272
2016	238

The number of complaints received has decreased each year. This may be attributed to activities listed below under taken by Council as well as the promotion of responsible pet ownership.

Current Council activities in place to minimise the number of nuisance complaints:

- Provide barking dog information booklets and barking dog diaries to those affected;
- Information regarding nuisance animals made available on Council's website;
- Encouraging de-sexing of cats and dogs to reduce the number of wandering incidences;
- Providing information on cat enclosures;
- Providing advice to owners of pets with behavioral issues;
- Authorised Officers available to present to schools and community groups on responsible pet ownership;

- Implementing the cat trapping program and provision of cat traps to local residents for trapping trespassing cats on their property;
- Patrols of the municipality;
- Recording all animal nuisance and wandering complaints allowing Authorised Officers to detect repeat offenders;
- Issuing Notices to Comply and infringement notices where applicable, and;
- Investigating nuisance complaints in a prompt manner.

Our plans

To support and encourage animal owners to manage their domestic animals in a responsible way which minimises the potential for nuisance complaints:

Key objectives:

- Reduce the number of animals at large in particular cats/wild cats
- Educate the community about animal nuisances

Performance measures:

Objective 5.1: To reduce the number of animals at large in particular cats/wildcats		
Activity	When	Evaluation
5.1.1 - Purchase additional cat traps.	June 2019	Review number of current cat taps and number of cat trap requests. Purchase additional cat traps to meet demand.
5.1.2 – Investigate (and initiate if feasible) cat desexing funding.	August 2018	Applications for funding submitted if available.
5.1.3 - Explore new partnerships with local veterinarians and community groups to address cat nuisance issues and another animal welfare matters in the region.	June 2018	Establish community networks and collaboration with local veterinary practices, pet businesses, community groups and neighboring Councils.

Objective 5.2: Educate community about animal nuisances		
Activity	When	Evaluation
5.2.1. Review and update educational material regarding Dog and Cat nuisance issues on Council's website	Annually	Material to be reviewed and updated annually.
5.2.2 – Update links on website to provide information about wildcats including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • destruction of native fauna • spread of disease through domestic cat population • injuries to domestic cats from fighting • excrement and spraying • home invasions by wildcats • unwanted pregnancies / overpopulation 	March 2018	Information available on website.

6. Dog attacks

Context

Actions in this section outlines programs and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals and is consistent with Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) and Sections 68A (2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act.

Current situation

Confinement of dogs is a priority as wandering dogs increase the risk to other pets, humans and livestock, and consumes time and resources of Authorised officers. Reports of dog attacks on both people and animals are increasing. This is possibly due to public awareness of the need to report this issue to Council.

Often when a dog attack is reported, officers find that it is a recurrence of an offence that went unreported previously. Had initial attacks been reported, subsequent attacks may have been averted. Education is still required to encourage community members to report dogs at large, dogs rushing and dog attacks of all types (minor or serious).

In the past three years, Council has investigated and managed the following numbers of dog attacks:

Year	Attacks on people	Attacks on livestock	Attacks on other animals
2013/2014	9	7	4
2014/2015	13	19	21
2015/2016	11	15	17
2016/2017	8	19	16

Council strives to minimise the risks of dog attacks to the community and animals from menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs. Council regularly implements measures to ensure that risk to the community is controlled, reduced or removed completely.

Council provides the following activities to minimise the number of dog attacks within the municipality:

- Conducting thorough investigations of all dog attacks reported.
- Issuing of infringement notices where relevant, including for non-serious dog attacks.
- Seizing and impounding of dogs in circumstances where the owners properties are believed to be unsecure to ensure dogs can be secured prior to release of the dog back to owner.
- Proactive patrols of parks and streets for wandering dogs.
- Declarations of dogs deemed to be dangerous, menacing or restricted breeds.
- Issuing infringements notices for dogs at large.
- Prosecuting matters pursuant to the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Further compliance and enforcement measures include:

- Responding to all wandering dogs reports.
- Attending after hours emergency dog complaints.
- Attending to all reports of dogs showing aggressive behavior as a matter of urgency.
- Investigating all alleged dog attacks and instigating legal action as required.
- Declaring animals as menacing or dangerous as required.
- Ensuring the effective enforcement of controls that are put in place under state legislation, local laws and council orders.
- Investigation of reported attacks, and follow up on compliance.

Council has an internal procedure in relation to dog attacks on people or other animals. Following an investigation a prosecution brief is prepared. Each brief is reviewed by the Co-ordinator of Public Health and Regulatory Services, who then makes further recommendations to the Director of Development and Planning who determines appropriate course of action and final approval.

Our plans

To minimise the risk of dog attacks on people and animals.

Key objectives:

- To reduce the number of dog attacks across the municipality
- Education regarding responsible pet ownership in particular dogs at large

Performance measures

Objective 6.1: To reduce the number of dog attacks across the municipality		
Activity	When	Evaluation
6.1.1 - Undertake routine patrols across the municipality with a focus on dogs at large.	Daily	Record to be kept of location of patrols in Sysaid when investigating complaints.
6.1.2- Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, such as a checklist to ensure your backyard is safe and secure for containing your dog with regular community reminders including fence heights for rural residential blocks, through media and updated website information.	Ongoing	Backyard containment material produced. Checklist developed and available on website, through mailouts and Customer Service Centres.
6.1.3 - Awareness campaign for both property/stock owner and animal owner re: potential destruction of dog found in paddock with stock.	Ongoing	Record number of media releases.

Objective 6.2: Education regarding responsible pet ownership in particular dogs at large		
Activity	When	Evaluation
6.2.1 - Media release (newspaper, Facebook), Website.	School Holiday periods	Record number of media releases .

7. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Context

Actions in this section address 68A(2)(c)(vi) and 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) – by outlining programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the DAA and the regulations.

Current situation

Swan Hill Rural City Council has the following declared dogs currently registered within the municipality:

Declared Dogs 2017	
Restricted breed dogs	1 (deceased)
Registered declared dangerous dogs	4
Registered declared menacing dogs	2

The DAA defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)

Council's Animal Management Officers are trained in identifying restricted breed dogs and respond to reports or sightings of possible restricted breed dogs.

Council undertake the following activities to monitor restricted breed, dangerous and menacing dogs within the municipality:

- Attend all complaints relating to suspected restricted breed, dangerous and menacing dogs.
- Conduct annual inspections and random audits of all declared dangerous dog sites to ensure compliance.
- Seize dogs suspected of being a Restricted Breed Dog.
- Declaration included on all registration renewal forms as to the status of the animal under restricted breed legislation.
- Infringement notices issued for detected breaches.
- Prosecution instigated where required.
- Council provides information and links on Council's website.
- Issuing media releases relating to legislative changes and updates.

Our plans

To minimise the risks of dog attacks to the community and animals from menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

Key objectives:

- To obtain a high level of compliance from the owners of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs
- Increase Officer awareness of location of declared dangerous or menacing dogs to improve safety when attending premises

Performance measures:

Objective 7.1: To obtain a high level of compliance from the owners of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
7.1.1 - Undertake inspections of all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs with zero tolerance for non-compliance as detailed in the Domestic Animals Regulations 2005.	Annually	All properties audited and owners compliant with requirements.
7.1.2 - Continue community messaging with regard to dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs. Includes scheduled and ad-hoc topics across the year via social media, media releases, website.	Ongoing	Record number of media releases.

Objective 7.2: Increase Officer awareness of location of declared dangerous or menacing dogs to improve safety when attending premises

Activity	When	Evaluation
7.2.1 - All locations where declared dangerous dogs are kept will be identified on Council's Exponare mapping system.	As required	Council's Exponare mapping system to be updated to record the properties where declared dangerous dogs are kept.

8. Overpopulation and high euthanasia

Context

Actions in this section address Sections 68A(2)(c)(iv) and 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)- by outlining programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

Current situation

Council is committed to ensuring that all unclaimed animals are given the opportunity to find a new home. Council strives for positive community and animal welfare based outcomes wherever possible and works hard to reunite animals with owners at first point, without taking animals to the pound.

Council's pound and euthanasia procedures are guided by the Domestic Animals Act 1994. Council aims to wherever possible return any lost or seized at-large animal to its owner. However, an animal must be identifiable (ID tag or microchip) to enable Council to do this. All unidentifiable animals are advertised on Council's website for eight days.

After eight days, animals unclaimed from the pound, and are suitable for rehousing, are relocated through an 84y agreement with a rehousing organisation. It is important to note that a large number of impounded and euthanised cats are wild cats.

There is a large unchecked wild cat population which creates a serious problem of uncontrolled breeding and attacks on native wildlife. It is important that community members differentiate owned from unowned cats, and take responsibility for owned animals by registering, micro-chipping, desexing and securely confining them to their property.

Council assists property owners with cat trapping to remove unwanted and unowned animals. In meeting this commitment, Council continues to advocate and work closely with animal welfare groups under a Section 84y agreement to ensure stray animals are re-homed.

Below provides an overview of impounded animals that were rehomed, rehoused and euthanased:

Impounded animals	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Dogs				
Returned to Owner	129	101	102	77
Rehomed	183	141	154	98
Euthanased	26	29	24	13
Cats				
Returned to owner	9	7	20	17
Rehomed	17	75	68	68
Euthanased	241	189	180	91

In 2016/17 188 dogs were impounded. 40% of those dogs were reclaimed by their owner, 52% were adopted and 8% were euthanased as they were unsuitable to be re-homed.

In 2016/17 176 cats were impounded. 10% of cats were reclaimed by their owner, 39% were adopted and 51% were euthanased as they were wild and uncontrollable feral cats.

Council currently provides compliance activities are provided for the management of overpopulation and high euthanasia rates within the municipality:

- Ensuring all unregistered cats and dogs are micro-chipped and registered prior to being released to owner;
- Investigating all alleged breeding establishments;
- Enforcing Council Local Laws pertaining to the prescribed number of animal allowed on a property, and;
- Providing humane trigger plate traps under strict guidelines to residents to trap wild and trespassing domestic cats.

Our plans

To increase levels of responsible pet ownership of cats, reduce unwanted and uncontrolled breeding in domestic animals and retain low euthanasia rates for impounded animals.

Key objectives:

- To continue encouraging de-sexing of animals within the municipality
- Continuance of Section 84Y agreement/s with approved animal rescue organisation/s

Performance Measures:

Objective 8.1: To continue encouraging de-sexing of animals within the municipality		
Activity	When	Evaluation
8.1.1 - Discount registration fees for cats and dogs that are both de-sexed and micro-chipped.	Annually	Number of new animals registered in this category yearly.
8.1.2- Media campaigns promoting the benefits of de-sexing.	Ongoing	Record number of media releases.
8.1.3 - Seek funding opportunities at a regional level to support reducing the costs of desexing programs.	July 2018	Identification of opportunities for a regional desexing program with neighboring Councils and seek funding opportunities with State Government bodies.

Objective 8.2: Continuance of Section 84Y agreement/s with approved animal rescue organisations		
Activity	When	Evaluation
8.2.1 - Maintain current 84Y agreements.	Annually	Agreement renewed.
8.2.2 - Investigate and instigate additional 84Y agreements.	Ongoing	Suitable agreements implemented.

9. Domestic Animal Businesses

Context

This section address 68A(2)(c)(ii) and 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f) – by outlining programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation.

Current situation

There are six Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality. This includes two Council pound facilities, with one located in Swan Hill and the second in Robinvale. There is one pet shop and three pet boarding establishments.

Council's provides the following activities in working with domestic animal breeding businesses include:

- Annual registration and renewal of Domestic Animal Business permits.
- Conduct regular audits of the Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with regulations.
- Supply and distribution of information related to domestic animal businesses and the relevant codes of practice.
- Inspection of suspected animal business activity.
- Investigation of reports/complaints.

Our plans

Council to work in partnership with Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with relevant standards and to protect the welfare of animals.

Key objectives:

- Identify unregistered domestic animal business owners and operators
- Identified Domestic Animal Businesses to be compliant with legislation

Performance Measures:

Objective 9.1: Identify unregistered domestic animal business owners and operators

Activity	When	Evaluation
9.1.1 - Follow up possible DAB's identified during property inspections and complaint/notifications from public.	Ongoing	Identified DAB's registered with Council.
9.1.2 - Check media sources / social media for advertisements.	Ongoing	Data entered to sysaid & reviewed quarterly.

Objective 9.2: Identified Domestic Animal Businesses to be compliant with legislation

Activity	When	Evaluation
9.2 .1 - Conduct an annual inspection to ensure all identified Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB) within the shire are registered and comply with applicable legislation and Codes of Practice.	Ongoing	100% of all DAB's inspected prior to renewal and action taken for any non-compliance. Annual permit renewals sent.
9.2.2 – Ensure Council pounds are fit for purpose and can meet current and increase animal management demands.	July 2018	Undertake a feasibility study to determine if current pounds are adequate for current and future trend activities.
9.2.3 – Ensure Council pound processes reflect best practice standards.	Annually	Review current pound policy and procedures.

10. Other matters animals

Context

This section provides for the review of other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district.

The actions in the section address 68A(2)(e) Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

Municipal Emergency Management - Current situation

Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan briefly includes response and relief of animal management in an emergency. The Municipal Emergency Management Plan MEMP was endorsed by Council on 17 October 2017.

Our plans

Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan to contain current and relevant information for the relief and recovery functions of animal management in an emergency.

Key objective:

- To conduct an annual review of Animal Management in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan

Performance measure:

Objective 10.1: To conduct an annual review of Emergency Animal Management Plan (EAMP)		
Activity	When	Evaluation
10.1.1 – Review Animal Management functions in the Municipal Emergency Management Plan to ensure current and up to date.	Annually	Reviewed animal management section submitted to Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

11. Annual review of Plan and annual reporting

Context

This section provides for the annual review of the plan and annual reporting. Under section 68A(3) of the Domestic Animals Act, every Council must:

- a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.
- b) Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.
- c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Process

The monitoring of the performance of the plan will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the DAA. In addition, Council will continue to conduct its monthly monitoring of the performance of the Animal Management Unit.

The key performance measures within this Domestic Animal Management Plan are to be monitored on a monthly basis by the Co-ordinator of Public Health and Regulatory Services in conjunction with the Regulatory Services Team.

The results of this monthly monitoring will enable Council to adjust the Plan ahead of the annual review. The results are also reported to Council's Executive Management Team meetings, which are conducted on a weekly basis.

A review of performance under the DAMP is required to be included in Council's Annual Report. Measurements should relate to activities and targets in this Plan and should include educational programs, increased registration of domestic animals, reduction of animal's at large, decreased numbers of dog attacks, and increases in compliance and levels of community satisfaction as a measure of success.

It should be noted that if performance under the DAMP is not sufficient, further revision of the Action Plan and its methods may be required and should be recommended.

Review cycle/date for this Plan

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Co-ordinator of Public Health and Regulatory Services. The Plan will be reviewed and a new Domestic Animal Management Plan will be completed on or before 30 June 2021.

Appendix A

Current and planned training for Authorised Officers

Authorised officer training – basic	Current	Planned
Industry training:	Completed by all Authorised Officers.	Refresher courses as required.
Animal handling		
Breed identification		
Animal assessment		
Statement taking and brief preparation		
Evidence presentation and prosecution skills		
Loading and unloading animals		
Emergency first aid for domestic animals		
Court etiquette training		
Court warrants, issue and filing		
Conflict resolution		
Aggressive dog handling		
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) training	Completed by all Authorised Officers.	Refresher courses as required.
Animal control equipment use and care		
Animal handling induction		
Animal handling practical skills and practice		
Manual handling		
Emergency evacuation procedures		
Dealing with aggressive customers		
Conflict resolution		
Council policies and procedures		
Bureau of Animal Welfare – Training and information seminars, for example dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs	Officers to attend on a rotational basis	As offered.
Municipal Association of Victoria and local government professionals – training and information days		
Induction Program for new staff		
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	As required	As required
Certificate IV Government statutory and compliance		